

BITTER LEMONS

*Eulogy of Love and Cyprus*

IN AMARA INSVLA CITRORVM

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SUR L'ILE DES CITRONS AMERS

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ON THE ISLAND OF BITTER LEMONS

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PÅ DE BITTRA CITRONERNAS Ö

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НА ОСТРОВЕ ГОРЬКИХ ЛИМОНОВ

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# BITTER LEMONS

EULOGY OF LOVE  
AND CYPRUS



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## PREFACE

IT IS W.H.E. Lecky, a historian himself, who tells us that life is not poetry but history. However, the historian's perspective of life (by which I mean the sum of experiences and actions that constitute our existence as human, or, humane beings) is, owing to his naturalism, confined within narrow limits. Our life is not the property of any particular class, category, or academic discipline. On the other hand, the art of writing poems precedes that of historiography; the former, in Ancient Greece, gave rise to the latter. For this reason, I think, poets cannot be placed lower in rank or importance. Surely there have been bad or mediocre poets throughout the human presence in this world, but they, in some unintended cooperation with their 'malicious' critics, have not caused any loss to the realm of beauty. And the Muses continually preside over the arts, giving the inspiration that motivates a poet, an artist, a historian, or a philosopher. The gloomy uniformity of ordinary days is interrupted by sudden, strange, and intensified 'starry' moments in the flux of transitory things.

The writers of history tell us good stories. This being so self-evident we seldom remember that the most impressive stories are given effective force by historians, who, fascinated by past events as they seem to be, become poets or rhetoricians. In consequence, historians are potentially good and sociable fellows.—It should be borne in mind that 'rhetoric', in the first place, means the art of using language effectively in speech or

writing (body language, or silent communication not excluded). Moreover, there is no essential difference between rhetoric and poetry. All you need is style and, perhaps, love as well.

Aphrodite, the goddess of love, may cause loss or destruction. This is well documented by ancient authors and all history. It was Aphrodite who, carried by the Zephyrs from Cythera to Cyprus, vented her wrath on the women of Lemnos for not honouring her sufficiently.

She made the female inhabitants of the island have an unpleasant smell; that is why their husbands abandoned them for Thracian slave girls. But this is not the point where the story ends. We read that the inflamed women of Lemnos determined to slaughter all the men of the said island. After committing this sexist genocide, they boldly established a community of women only. These feminists were not interested in producing offspring of either sex. Alternatively, the liberated female islanders, deprived of the pleasures of matrimony, simply did not think of what they were doing, since there was absolutely no conceivable future to their community. So, what happened?—The Argonauts arrived at Lemnos, on the initiative of the life-giving Aphrodite. The problem was wiped out by the heroes and heroines together.

Aphrodite also compelled the daughters of Cinyras in Paphos to become prostitutes for strangers, who, not worrying about their health, faithfully gave their gift to the Goddess. Nevertheless, Aphrodite protected the Trojan race, even if she was unable to avert the fall of Homer's Troy (in 1184 BC—the traditional date for the destruction). Aphrodite helped Aeneas, a Trojan hero, to survive and seek a new fatherland (i.e. Italy, by anachronism). Aeneas was destined to become the ancestor of the Romans. Accordingly, Aphrodite acted as the protectress of Rome herself, the Latin Venus.



Cruelty is presumably not the essence of all human history. But the spectacular evidence of human cruelty, causing pain wilfully, cannot be disregarded indulgently. — On 1<sup>st</sup> August, 1571, Famagusta, in Cyprus, fell to the triumphant Turkish attackers, when Marcantonio Bragadino, the great Venetian commander, had to accept the Ottoman terms of surrender. He was not exposed to the enemy by treachery. It was the fiend who betrayed the Venetian, who was to become the most unfortunate of all the heroes known to history. This is a very sad story, indeed. Let us follow the rhetoric example by Timothy Boatswain: ‘The Turks, infuriated by Famagusta’s resistance, decided to make an example of Bragadino by visiting on him a horrible catalogue of cruelty and humiliation: after a mock execution, his nose and ears were cut off and he was forced to crawl around the city kissing the ground; he was then tied in a bosun’s chair, hauled to the top of a galley spar, and finally flayed alive; his skin, stuffed with straw, was paraded through the streets and symbolically consigned to a slave prison.’—Famagusta was the last Venetian outpost on the island of Aphrodite, held by Venice, La Serenis-sima, since 1489. Nicosia (Lephcosia), in her turn, fell as early as September 1570, and 30,000 people were massacred.

I am still waiting for you,  
Aphrodite, here in Cyprus.  
Once more, I’ll be patient and wait  
until you come from Cythera,  
to this pasture for horses,  
to these blooming meadows  
with so many flowers of April.  
And when gentle breezes are blowing,  
you, Immortal, will come to me.

## CHRONOLOGY

- 400,000–100,000 BC Stone age hunters in northern Greece.  
3000 Cycladic human marble figurines.  
1500 Volcano eruption on Santorini (Thera).  
1200 Mycenaean civilisation collapses.  
1050 Invasion by the Dorian Greeks onto the Aegean islands  
and Asia Minor.  
800 Phoenicians settle in Cyprus.  
776 Alleged date for the first Olympic games.  
750–700 Greeks begin to use vowel letters in writing.  
700 Homer and Hesiod active.  
600 First philosophers appear at Miletos.  
490 192 Athenian soldiers die at Marathon.  
480–479 Invasion of Greek mainland by Xerxes' troops from  
Asia.  
431 Outbreak of the Peloponnesian war.  
404 Athens capitulates to Sparta.  
399 Socrates is supposed to commit suicide.  
396–47 Plato active.  
323 Alexander the Great dies at Babylon.  
300 Stoicism is founded by Zeno, a Cypriot, at Athens.  
285 Famagusta is founded in Cyprus by King Ptolemy.  
196 Romans declare Greece liberated.  
146 Corinth is sacked by Romans.  
86 Sulla plunders Athens.  
31 Naval battle of Actium between 'East and West'.

- AD 49–52 St Paul in Greece.
- 161–180 Emperor Marcus Aurelius follows Stoic morality.
- 363 Julian the Apostate is wounded mortally.
- 395 Olympic games suppressed.
- 415 Murder of Hypatia, a philosopher, at Alexandria.
- 524 Boëthius martyred at Pavia.
- 529 Emperor Justinian closes pagan philosophic schools at Athens.
- 1080 Normans arrive to raid Greece.
- 1453 Ottoman Turks capture Constantinople.
- 1489 Venetian marine power starts ruling Cyprus.
- 1570 Lefkocia (Nicosia) falls to Turks. Famagusta is put under siege for several months.
- 1571 Famagusta surrenders to Turks.
- 1604 *Othello* is written by Shakespeare.
- 1804 British seize Ionian islands.
- 1824 Byron dies at Missolonghi.
- 1826 Missolonghi is taken by Turks.
- 1827 Autonomy of Greece recognized by the Great Powers.
- 1878 Cyprus is taken from Turks by British forces.
- 1896 First modern Olympic games at Athens.
- 1920 King Alexander of Greece dies of blood poisoning from a monkey bite.
- 1922 Planned Greek assault upon Constantinople stopped by the Great Powers.
- 1922 Greek dream of annexing ‘old Greek’ territories crushed by Mustafa Kemal’s Turkey.
- 1929 Treaty of friendship between Greece and Turkey.
- 1941 Crete invaded by Germans.
- 1951 Greece and Turkey enter NATO.
- 1954 British declare that Cyprus will never be independent.

- 1960 Cyprus becomes republic.
- 1963 Violence and fighting between Greek and Turkish inhabitants in Cyprus.
- 1964 Turkish plans for a full-scale military intervention into Cyprus not carried out, probably owing to the influence of USA.
- 1967 'Colonels' coup' in Greece.
- 1974 Coup d'etat by Greek officers stationed in Cyprus with the aim of uniting Cyprus with Greece.
- 1974 Turks begin landings in Cyprus and Greek Cypriots lose almost half the island.
- 1975 Cypriot Turks create their 'Turkish Federal State of Cyprus'.
- 1983 Foundation of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC).
- 1996 Olympic summer games at Atlanta (disappointingly to Greeks).
- 2002 Cyprus remains divided into two territories.
- 2004 Olympic summer games at Athens.

# BITTER LEMONS



IN AMARA INSVLA  
CITRORVM



TREMOR abest treni  
post viam ferream dirutam,  
hic abhinc annos plures.  
Hodie Cypridis insulam  
Viridis Linea dissecat.  
In ora cruoris Venerei,  
sub clivis montis Troodii,  
perdita zona gemmata.  
O Cyprus!

Campus iuxta Larnacam  
nos tam fortiter angit.  
Est ibi formosa Morfu,  
exul urbs, nomine digna suo.  
—Cyrenia! Tu quoque longe  
remota loco proprio.  
In Turci maris tutela  
alieno lates in gremio.  
Usque manet Crescens Luna  
et Viridis fertur Linea.

Num reliqua possint addi  
præter Pafon Leucosianve?

– Fuit exodus Famagustæ.  
Ex castro Famagustæ tu  
orientem spectas, Othello!  
Polluis tu tibi mentis undam,  
foris cum fluctus æstuant.  
Mare luit, mordet, devorat  
hasce duas oras.  
A Princeps Cypri phantasmatum!  
– Famagustæ nemo spirat.



SAARELLA KATKERAN  
SITRUUNAN



M<sup>AA</sup> ei tunne junaa.  
Purkivat rautatien  
liian kauan sitten.

– Kypron saaren nyt  
halkoo Vihreä Linja.  
Verirannalle Afroditeen,  
Troodosin vuoren alle,  
murtui ja katosi  
helminauha. Voi Kypros!

Ja kenttäsi Larnakan!  
– Ahdistat kovin meitä.  
Vaan Morfu – niin olet  
kaunis, nimesi arvoinen.  
Kyrenia! Sinutkin kauas  
vietiin, jouduit pois:  
Turkinmeren suojaan,  
piiloon, vieraan kainaloon.  
Ja yhä kestää Puolikuu,  
ja juoksee Vihreä Linja.

Mitä muuta mainita voin  
kuin Pafon ja Lefkosian?

–Famagustan exodus sitten!  
Linnasta Famagustan  
katsot itään, Othello!  
On rauhaton mielesi laine;  
ulkona maininki pauhaa.  
Meri huuhtoo, kalvaa, syö  
jo rantaa kumpaakin.  
Prinssi Kypron – aaveiden herra!  
Ei Famagustassa huokaa kukaan.

## VERSIONS



ΣΤΟ ΝΗΣΙ ΤΗΣ  
ΠΙΚΡΗΣ ΛΕΜΟΝΙΑΣ



Η γη έχει ξεχάσει το τραίνο  
αφότου οι γραμμές του γίναν κομμάτια  
εδώ και πολλά χρόνια πριν.  
Στης Κύπρου πάνω το νησί  
η Πράσινη Γραμμή τώρα τρέχει.  
Στην ακτή των λουτρών του αίματος και της Αφροδίτης  
στης Τρόοδου πάνω τις πλαγιές  
μια κλωστή με μαργαριτάρια  
έχει σπάσει κι έχουν σκορπιστεί,  
ω Κύπρος!

Και ο κάμπος της Λάρνακας  
στενεύει πάνω μας.  
Αλλά η Μόρφου — γεμάτη ομορφιά  
εξορισμένη  
αξίζει, αλήθεια, τ' όνομά σου.  
Το ίδιο κι η Κυρήνεια  
φευγάτη  
για να ερημώνεται από την Τούρκικη θάλασσα,  
για να κρύβεται κάτω από 'να ξένο χέρι.  
Κι ακόμα παραμένει η Ημισέληνος  
κι ακόμα η Πράσινη Γραμμή τρέχει.

Τί άλλο μπορεί να πει κανείς  
εκτός από την Πάφο και τη Λευκωσία;

Και η θρυλική Εξοδος της Φαμαγκούστα  
από το Κάστρο της Αμμοχώστου  
κοιτάς προς τ' ανατολικά, Οθέλλο,  
ο νους σου υψώνει ασταμάτητα  
εκεί έξω τ' αφρισμένα κύματα.  
Η θάλασσα πλένει, γλείφει,  
τρώει αυτές τις ακτές.  
Ο Πρίγκιπας της Κύπρου και των φαντασμάτων — —  
κανείς δεν ζει στη Φαμαγκούστα.

# NELL'ISOLA DEI LIMONI AMARI



**D**A MOLTISSIMI anni più non si sente  
il tremante sferragliare del treno  
sulla ferrovia distrutta.  
La verde linea taglia oggi in due  
l'isola di Cipro.  
sul lido bagnato dal sangue di Venere  
ai piedi dei monti Troodos  
collana di gemme distrutta, spezzata  
O Cipro!

Il campo di Larnaca si restringe  
e si stringe su di noi soffocandoci miseramente.  
C'è la bella città di Morfu  
degnata del suo nome.  
Cirene! Anche tu così lontana da te stessa,  
sotto la tutela del mare turco  
ti nascondi in un grembo a te estraneo.  
Finché la Mezza Luna rimane  
e viene sopportata la verde linea.

Può essere aggiunto altro  
oltre a Pafos e Leucosia?

C'è stato l'esodo di Famagosta.  
Otello! Dal castello della città di Famagosta  
guardi ad oriente.  
Insudici l'onda della tua mente  
mentre fuori si agitano i flutti.  
Il mare lava, corrode, divora  
le due rive.  
O Principe degli spettri di Cipro!  
A Famagosta nessuno vive.



# SUR L'ILE DES CITRONS AMERS



LE TREMBLEMENT du train n'est plus.  
La voie démantelée  
Depuis déjà bien longtemps.  
L'île de Chypre est scindée par la Ligne Verte.  
Sur le rivage d'Aphrodite et des massacres  
au pied des Monts Trodos  
Un collier de perles s'est brisé,  
disparu à jamais. Ô Chypre!

Et ton champ de Larnaca!  
Tu nous serres à la gorge.  
Mais toi, Morphou, comme tu est belle  
et digne de ton nom.  
Et toi Kyrenia! Si éloignée de nous,  
à nous arrachée;  
A l'abri de la mer de Turquie,  
enfouie sous un bras étranger.  
Mais demeure le croissant  
et court la Ligne Verte.

Que puis-je citer d'autre  
que Paphos et Nicosie?

— L'exode de Famagouste, alors!  
Du château de Famagouste, toi Othello,  
tu diriges ton regard vers l'est.  
L'onde de ton esprit est agitée;  
Dehors gronde la houle.  
La mer baigne, tourmente et dévore déjà  
les deux rivages.  
Ô prince de Chypre, Seigneur des Revenants!  
Il n'y a âme qui vive à Famagouste.

# ON THE ISLAND OF BITTER LEMONS



THE LAND has forgotten the train:  
they tore the railway to pieces  
too long ago.  
Today, dividing the Isle of Cyprus,  
the Green Line is running.  
On the coast of bloodbaths and Venus,  
at the foot of the Troodes Mountains  
a string of pearls  
broke off, was dissolved.  
Oh, Cyprus!

The Larnacan field,  
now closing in on us!  
But you, Morphou, full of beauty,  
worthy of your name.  
And you, Cyrenia,  
so remote from us,  
sheltered by the Turkish Sea,  
hiding under an alien arm.  
But the Crescent, it remains,  
and on runs the Green Line.

What else should be mentioned  
besides Paphos and Lephcosia?

The exodus of Famagusta.  
From the castle of Famagusta  
you are looking east, Othello,  
shattering the billows of your mind,  
and the waves swelling outside,  
the sea washing, gnawing, eating up  
the two shores.  
The Prince of Cyprus – and of ghosts,  
Famagusta, no one's home.

# AUF DER INSEL DER BITTEREN ZITRONEN



ZÜGE kennt man hier nicht.  
Die Schienen wurden herausgerissen  
vor allzu langer Zeit.  
Zerschnitten ist Zypern  
von der Grünen Linie.  
Am blutigen Strand unter Troodos,  
dem Gebirge der Aphrodite,  
zerbrach eine Perlenkette  
und versank. Oh Zypern!

Und dein Flugplatz Larnaka!  
– Du beengst uns sehr.  
Nur Morphu – ja, du bist  
schön, deines Namens wert.  
Kyrenia! Auch du,  
weit verschleppt, musstest weg:  
in den Schutz des Türkischen Meeres,  
ins Versteck, unter fremde Obhut.  
Darüber steht ständig der Halbmond.  
Und so zieht sich die Grüne Linie.

Was sonst noch kann ich erwähnen  
außer Paphos und Lewkosia?

– Den Exodus Famagustas!  
Von der Zitadelle Famagustas  
schaust du nach Osten, Othello!  
Unruhig sind die Wellen deines Gemütes,  
und hoch gehen draußen die Wogen.  
Das Meer schäumt, frisst und nagt  
schon an beiden Ufern.  
Prinz von Zypern – Herr der Geister!  
Niemand wohnt in Famagusta.

PÅ DE BITTRA  
CITRONERNAS Ö



BORTA är mullret från tåget,  
de rev järnvägen  
här för länge sedan.  
– Idag klyves ön Cypern  
av Gröna Linjen.  
På Afrodites blodiga strand  
under Troodosbergen  
bröts och försvann  
ett pärlband. Ack Cypern!

Och ditt fält vid Larnaca!  
Du tränger oss hårt.  
Men Morfou – vad du är  
vackert, värt ditt namn.  
Kyrenia! Du blev också  
fört långt, långt bort,  
skyddat av Turkiska havet,  
gömt i ett främmande sköte.  
Halvmånen, den består alltjämt  
och löper Gröna Linjen.

Vad annat manne nämnas kan  
utom Pafos och Levkosia?

– Exodus från Famagusta.  
Från slottet i Famagusta  
du tittar åt öster, Othello!  
Du rubbar ditt sinnes våg,  
då böljorna därute svallar.  
Havet sköljer, gnager, slukar  
dessa två stränder.  
Ack Prins av Cypern – spökenas herre!  
I Famagusta suckar ingen.



PÅ DE BITRE  
SITRONERS ØY



L ANDET har glemt toget.  
L Skinnene revet opp  
altfor lenge siden.  
Nå gjennomskjærer Den grønne linje  
Kypros øy.  
På Afrodites blodige strand  
under Troodos fjell  
brast og svant  
et perlebånd. Akk Kypros!

Og din Larnaca fly- og valplass!  
Du beklemmer oss brutalt.  
Men Morfu – du er så  
skjønn, er ditt navn verdig.  
Kyrenia! Også du førtes  
langt bort, havnet i det fjerne:  
i ly av Det tyrkiske hav,  
i skjul, under en fremmed arm.  
Og Halvmånen, den består stadig.  
Slik løper Den grønne linje.

Hva annet kan jeg nevne  
enn Pafos og Lefkosia?

Jo, Famagustas Exodus!  
Fra Famagusta fort  
skuer du mot øst, Othello!  
Ditt sinn bølger opprørt;  
der ute drønner dønningene.  
Havet bryter, gnager, glefser  
mot begge kyster.  
Prins av Kypros – spøkelsenes fyrste!  
I Famagusta bor ingen.

NA WYSPIE  
GORZKICH CYTRYN



ZIEMIA nie pamięta pociągu,  
przecież zerwano kolej żelazną  
za dawno temu.

Na wyspie Cypra  
biegnie granica zielona.  
Na brzegu rzezi, Venusa,  
na skałach Troodu  
zerwał się, zniknął  
sznur pereł. O, Cypru!

I pole Łarnaki,  
ty jesteś ciasne dla nas.  
Ale Morfu – pełna piękności,  
na banicji,  
jesteś godna imienia.  
I ty, Cyrenio, jesteś daleko,  
preszła  
na łono Tureckiego morza,  
pod cudze ramię.  
I półksiężyc trwa nadal  
i biegnie granica zielona.

Co innego wspomniałbym  
jak Pafo i Lefkosię?

I eksodus Famagusty –  
Ze zamku Famagusty  
patrzysz na wschód, Otełło.  
Niespokojna jest fala twojej duszy,  
a na dworze martwe fale.  
Morze zmywa, gryzie, je  
brzeg, i jeden i drugi.  
Książę Cypra – upiórów,  
nikt nie mieszka w Famaguście.

# НА ОСТРОВЕ ГОРЬКИХ ЛИМОНОВ



**З**емля забыла поезд,  
ведь снесли железную дорогу  
слишком долго тому назад.  
На острове Кипра  
идет теперь зеленая линия.  
На берегу кровавых баней и Венеры,  
на скалах Троода  
оборвалась, потерялась  
нитка жемчуга. О, Кипр!

И поле Ларнаки  
ты тесно для нас.  
А Морфу — полна красоты,  
в изгнании,  
ты достойна имени твоего.  
Кирения, и ты  
убежала далеко,  
укрылась за Турецким морем,  
на лоне чужого.  
Но все еще держится полумесяц  
и идет зеленая линия.

Что же еще упомянуть,  
кроме Пафоса и Левкосии?

А легендарный экзод Фамагусты —  
Из замка Фамагусты  
ты смотришь на восток, Офелло.  
Неспокойна волна души твоей,  
а там мертвая зыбь.  
Море омывает, точит, разъедает  
берег тот и другой.  
Принц Кипра — призраков,  
в Фамагусте никто не живет.

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